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2007-05848/

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For Immediate Release
2007FOR0117-001041
Aug. 17, 2007

Ministry of Forests and Range

ONTARIO FIRE CREWS HEAD TO BRITISH COLUMBIA

VICTORIA – British Columbia is preparing to welcome 80 firefighters from Ontario as fire activity increases in the Southeast Fire Centre, Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman announced today.

"Given the number of fires our crews are fighting in the southeast, and the current outlook for continued hot dry and windy weather, we're taking advantage of the resource-sharing agreement we have with other provinces, and asking for additional crews," said Coleman.

Ontario crews will arrive Sunday, staying for up to 19 days. Staff include four unit crews of 20 people each, who are dispatched to larger fires where significant resources are needed, and two agency representatives. These personnel will be deployed to the fire where they are most needed.

The fire danger rating in southern British Columbia is currently high to extreme. Strong winds combined with low humidity and high temperatures have resulted in volatile fire behaviour across the southeast of the province.

Gusty winds have contributed to the rapid growth of several fires in the region. The Pend D'Oreille fire southeast of Trail grew nearly 1,450 hectares on Thursday as a result of volatile weather conditions.

All deployments are co-ordinated through the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC). Costs of this deployment are being paid by the Ministry of Forests and Range, Protection Program. This year, British Columbia has sent crews to six other jurisdictions. This is the first time this season that British Columbia has asked for crews.

The public reports nearly half of all wildfires in B.C. Please continue to report smoke and flames by calling toll-free 1-800-663-5555 or *5555 on most cellular networks.

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